

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 01447 181000Z

ACTION EA-09

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, KS, JA

SUBJECT: ROK FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS JAPAN

SUMMARY: ROK PRESS HEADLINED FONMIN'S MEETING WITH JAPANESE COUNTERPART, AND EMPHASIZED DISCUSSION OF TROOP WITHDRAWAL, WITHOUT PROVIDING DETAILS. CHIEF IMPRESSION LEFT BY REPORTS IS OF CORDIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE ACCOMPLISHED. END SUMMARY

1. ALL MORNING PAPERS FEBRUARY 18 HEADLINED FEB 17 EVENING MEETING IN TOKYO BETWEEN KOREAN AND JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTERS PAK TONG-CHIN AND HATOYAMA IICHIRO. REPORTS OF FORMER PRIMIN KIM CHONG-P-IL'S EARLIER MEETING WITH PRIMIN FUKUDA ALSO GOT FRONT PAGE COVERAGE. ACCOUNTS OF PAK/HATOYAMA MEETING GAVE PRIMARY EMPHASIS TO DISCUSSION OF U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL.

2. ALL PAPERS REPORTED FONMINS DISCUSSED NORTHEAST ASIAN PEACE AND BALANCE OF POWER "IN GENERAL TERMS".

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MOST ALSO ADDED HATOYAMA INFORMED PAK OF US VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE'S VIEWS ON THAT SUBJECT. BESIDES TROOP ISSUE PRESS REPORTED FONMINS DISCUSSED ECONOMIC COOPERATION, JAPAN'S DECISION TO EXTEND HER TERRITORIAL WATERS, KOREA'S HOPES FOR SPEEDY DIET RATIFICATION OF 1974 CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT, TIMING OF THIS YEAR'S FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING, AND LEGAL STATUS OF KOREAN

RESIDENTS IN JAPAN. ALL PAPERS POINTEDLY NOTED TOKTO ISLAND (TAKESHIMA) WAS NOT DISCUSSED.

3. COVERAGE OF KIM/FUKUDA MEETING WAS ALMOST AS LENGTHY AS FONMINS' BUT ALL ACCOUNTS FOCUSED ON REPORTED ASSURANCE BY FUKUDA OF SUPPORT IN DIET FOR CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT. ALL PAPERS SAID FUKUDA URGED ROK/JAPAN CONTINENTAL SHELF COOPERATION IN AGE OF LIMITED NATURAL RESOURCES.

4. ALL PAPERS MENTIONED THE FONMINS'S UNUSUAL EVENING MEETING RAN THREE HOURS INSTEAD OF SCHEDULED TWO. CHOSON ILBO ELABORATED FONMINS "GOT ACQUAINTED" IN "SALON-TYPE ATMOSPHERE" WITH "FREE DISCUSSION". ABSENCE OF DISCUSSION OF TOKTO CONTRASTS WITH PLAN ISSUE CONTINUES TO RECEIVE IN PRESS HERE, MOST RECENTLY IN REPORT OF STUDENT DEMONSTRATION ABOUT OWNERSHIP OF ISLAND AT KOREAN CONSULATE IN OSAKA.

5. MOFA NORTHEAST ASIA DIVISION CHIEF YI TONG-IK TOLD EMBOFF FEBRUARY 18 THAT WHILE MOFA HAD NOT RECEIVED DETAILED REPORT OF FONMIN'S MEETING WITH HATOYAMA, CORDIAL ATMOSPHERE AND EXTENDED LENGTH OF DISCUSSION WERE ENCOURAGING SIGNS OF A CONTINUING CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ROK AND JAPAN UNDER FUKUDA GOVERNMENT. YI EXPRESSED VIEW THAT SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH JAPANESE WOULD HAVE FAVORABLE IMPACT ON CHANCES OF PASSAGE OF CONTINENTAL SHELF RATIFICATION IN DIET. ACCORDING TO YI, FONMIN WILL HAVE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH HATOYAMA AT DINNER AND WILL MAKE CALL ON PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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